



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

News Release

BATTLE MOUNTAIN DISTRICT NO. 20201219

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Bureau of Land Management to begin the 2020 Fish Creek Wild Horse Gather

BATTLE MOUNTAIN, Nev. – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Mount Lewis Field Office will begin a wild horse gather on or about December 26, 2020 on the Fish Creek Herd Management Area (HMA) located near Eureka, Nevada.. Gather operations will be conducted using the helicopter-assisted method.

Fish Creek HMA encompasses over 250,000 acres of public land and has an Appropriate Management Level (AML) of 107-180 wild horses. A helicopter survey conducted in December 2019, the current estimated population is 240 horses – approximately 140 percent of the high end of the established AML.

The BLM plans to gather approximately 195 wild horses, remove approximately 135 excess wild horses and treat up to 30 mares with PZP-22, a population suppression fertility control vaccine. The treated mares will be released back to the range along with up to 30 studs. Approximately 105 wild horses will remain in the HMA once gather operations are complete.

The purpose of the gather is to prevent undue or unnecessary degradation of the public lands associated with excess wild horses and burros, to restore a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationship on public lands, consistent with the provisions of Section 1333(b) of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. The action is also necessary to reduce overpopulation of wild horses within and outside the HMA, where there currently is not enough water to support the number of horses in the area, and to prevent further degradation of public lands by helping to balance herd size.

By balancing herd size with what the land can support, the BLM aims to protect habitat for other wildlife species such as sage grouse, pronghorn antelope, mule deer and elk. Removing excess animals would also enable significant progress toward achieving the Standards for Rangeland Health identified by the Resource Advisory Council.

“Gathers like this are only part of the actions we take to meet our obligations to ensure the health of rangelands within the HMA, to maintain a thriving ecological balance across public lands and to promote the well being of wild horse populations,” said **Doug Furtado, Battle Mountain District Manager**. “As always, we are committed to conducting safe and humane gather operations as we work to protect animal health and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance while protecting it from the deterioration associated with overuse.”

The BLM’s priority is to conduct safe, efficient, and successful wild horse and burro gather operations while ensuring humane care and treatment of all animals gathered. The BLM and its contractors will use the best available science and handling practices for wild horses and burros while meeting overall gather goals and objectives in accordance with the Comprehensive Animal Welfare Policy.

All horses identified for removal will be transported to the Bruneau Off-Range Corrals, located in Bruneau, Idaho. Upon arrival to the facility, all animals will be checked by a veterinarian and readied for the BLM's wild horse and burro Adoption and Sale Program.

Members of the public are welcome to view the gather operations, provided that doing so does not jeopardize the safety of the animals, staff and observers, or disrupt gather operations. Anyone wishing to attend gather operations is asked to RSVP by Nov. 24 to hohanlon@blm.gov.

The BLM will escort the public to gather observation sites located on public lands.

Once gather operations have begun, those wanting to view gather operations must call the gather hotline nightly at (775) 861-6700 to receive specific instructions on each days' meeting location and time.

The following COVID-19 guidelines will apply:

- Facemasks are required for daily safety briefings and in the observation areas.
- Always stay at least six feet from others.
- Bring hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to use as soap and water are not available at the gather site.
- Do not attend the gather if you are sick, think you might be getting sick or were recently exposed (within 14 days) to someone with COVID-19.

The BLM is conducting the gather under the DOI-BLM-NV-B010-2015-0011-Fish Creek Herd Management Area Wild Horse Gather Plan Environmental Assessment decision signed on February 9, 2015. Access the Decision Record and determination of National Environmental Policy Act adequacy at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/42687/510>.

Gather reports and additional information will be posted on the BLM website at <https://go.usa.gov/x78rK>. For technical information, contact Wild Horse and Burro Specialist Shawna Richardson at (775) 635-4181 or s1richar@blm.gov.

Photos from the gather will be uploaded daily and can be downloaded from <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmRYjDQc>.

For information on how to adopt or purchase a wild horse or burro, visit www.blm.gov/whb.

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The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in the 11 Western states and Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. In fiscal year 2018, the diverse activities authorized on BLM-managed lands generated \$105 billion in economic output across the country. This economic activity supported 471,000 jobs and contributed substantial revenue to the U.S. Treasury and state governments, mostly through royalties on minerals.